

IN THE CLAIMS:

The status of the claims is as follows:

1.-9. (canceled)

10. (previously presented) A device for at least partial introduction into a body passage, the device comprising: a long, outer envelope body; a long inner body that is at least partially peripherally surrounded by the envelope body; and a control device that enables and impedes relative movement between the envelope body and the inner body to respectively impart flexibility and rigidity to the entire device in a controllable manner; wherein the control device is itself formed by the arrangement and embodiment of the envelope body and the inner body and comprises no additional mechanical means in an annular intermediate region between the envelope body and the inner body; the material of the envelope body and the inner body is flexible yet torsionally resistant; and the envelope body and the inner body each have a polygonal cross section such that the envelope body and the inner body can be rotated relative to one another by the control device in such a way that the inner body makes contact at least partially with the envelope body.

11. (previously presented) A device according to claim 10; wherein the envelope body and the inner body each have a hexagonal cross section, are arranged concentrically to one another, and are dimensioned in such a way that the inner body, with the two bodies in their mutually rotated state, makes contact at all of its corners with an inner wall of the envelope body.

12. (previously presented) A device according to claim 11; wherein the control device controls the introduction of a pressure medium, or the application of a vacuum, to the annular intermediate region between the envelope body and the inner body.

13. (previously presented) A device according to claim 12; wherein the envelope body and the inner body are comprised of a magnetizable material, or are provided with a magnetizable coating.

14. (previously presented) A device according to claim 10; wherein the control device controls the introduction of a pressure medium, or the application of a vacuum, to the annular intermediate region between the envelope body and the inner body.

15. (previously presented) A device according to claim 10; wherein the envelope body and the inner body are comprised of a magnetizable material, or are provided with a magnetizable coating.

16. (previously presented) A device for at least partial introduction into a body passage, the device comprising: a long, outer envelope body; a long inner body that is at least partially peripherally surrounded by the envelope body; and a control device that enables and impedes relative movement between the envelope body and the inner body to respectively impart flexibility and rigidity to the entire device in a controllable manner; wherein the control device is itself formed by the arrangement and embodiment of the envelope body and the inner body and comprises no additional mechanical means in an annular intermediate region between the envelope body and the inner body; and the control device and the envelope body and the inner body are embodied in such a way that magnetic fields of different polarity are capable of being generated along the length of the envelope body and along the length of the inner body for the selective production of a mutual attraction of the two bodies.

17. (previously presented) A device according to claim 16; wherein the magnetic fields are capable of being produced by the application of an electrical voltage to the envelope body and the inner body.

18. (previously presented) A device according to claim 17; wherein the control device controls the introduction of a pressure medium, or the application of a vacuum, to the annular intermediate region between the envelope body and the inner body.

19. (previously presented) A device according to claim 18; wherein the envelope body and the inner body are comprised of a magnetizable material, or are provided with a magnetizable coating.

20. (previously presented) A device according to claim 16; wherein the envelope body and the inner body are comprised of a magnetizable material, or are provided with a magnetizable coating.

21. (previously presented) A device according to claim 20; wherein the magnetic fields are capable of being produced by the application of an electrical voltage to the envelope body and the inner body.

22. (withdrawn) A device for at least partial introduction into a body passage, comprising: a flexible outer tubular body dimensioned to be inserted lengthwise into a body passage; and an inner tubular body extending lengthwise in, and at least partially peripherally surrounded by, the outer body with an annular space between the two bodies, the inner and outer bodies having polygonal cross sections and being movable relative to one another to impart flexibility to the device and being selectively rotationally movable relative to one another to a limited extent to bring the inner and outer bodies into contact with one another to impart stiffness to the device.

23. (withdrawn) A device according to claim 22; wherein the polygonal cross sections of the inner and outer bodies have the same shape.

24. (withdrawn) A device according to claim 23; wherein the inner and outer bodies have plural sidewalls that define the polygonal cross sections, and corners of adjoining sidewalls of the inner body contact sidewalls of the outer body to limit the extent of relative rotational movement of the inner and outer bodies.

25. (withdrawn) A device according to claim 24; including a control device that controls relative rotational movement of the inner and outer bodies.

26. (withdrawn) A device for at least partial introduction into a body passage, comprising: a flexible outer tubular body dimensioned to be inserted lengthwise into a body passage; an inner tubular body extending lengthwise in, and at least partially peripherally surrounded by, the outer body with an annular space between the two bodies, the inner and outer bodies being movable relative to one another to impart flexibility to the device; and means for selectively creating magnetic attraction forces between the inner and outer bodies along the lengths thereof to restrain relative movement between the inner and outer bodies to impart stiffness to the device.

27. (withdrawn) A device according to claim 26;
wherein the means for selectively creating magnetic attraction
forces comprises means for creating magnetic fields of opposite
polarity along the lengths of the inner and outer bodies.

28. (withdrawn) A device according to claim 26;
wherein the means for selectively creating magnetic attraction
forces comprises magnetized regions of the inner and outer bodies
that are alternately oppositely polarized along the lengths of
the inner and outer bodies.

29. (withdrawn) A device according to claim 26;
wherein the means for selectively creating magnetic attraction
forces is disposed outside of, and not within, the annular space
between the inner and outer bodies.

ADDITIONAL FEE:

No additional fee is believed required in connection with this request for reconsideration; however, should it be determined that a fee is due, authorization is hereby given to charge any such fee to our Deposit Account Number 01-0268.